



ED REVIEW

December 30, 2005 (Happy Holidays!)

...a bi-weekly update on U.S. Department of Education activities relevant to the Intergovernmental and Corporate community and other stakeholders



NCLB UPDATE (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/>)

At a Chief State School Officers' forum on rural education, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education Beto Gonzalez announced the creation of the Center for Rural Education to consider the unique challenges facing rural schools. "I am committed to addressing the needs of our students, educators, and parents in rural America," Secretary Spellings said in a statement. "This new center will take a leadership role in advancing the cause of rural education." The center will be housed in the Department's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and will work in tandem with the existing Secretary's Task Force for Rural Education. Former U.S. Commissioner of Education William Smith will serve as the center's director. It is estimated that nearly 42 percent of the country's public schools are in rural communities or small towns. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/freedom/local/rural/>.

In January 2006, the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) will launch a new web site on school choice (www.buildingchoice.org), developed by WestED. The web site will feature information on creating and sustaining choice initiatives and profile school districts operating effective choice programs. The effort is a spin-off of OII's popular *Innovations in Education* book series (<http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.html>).

Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services has identified 11 states (FL, KS, KY, MA, MN, MT, NY, NC, OR, SC, and TX) that, despite the number of economically disadvantaged students they serve, have exceeded statistical expectations in fourth- or eighth-grade reading or math proficiency on the 2003 and 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (Notably, only three of those states [KS, MA, and MN] made the top 10 based on their raw NAEP scores.) However, no state exceeded expectations in both grades and both subjects. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

[http://www.schoolmatters.com/App/SES/SPSServlet/StaticMenuRequest?MenuType=n
aep_comparative_state_performance_2005_schoolmatters.shtml&MenuLevel=1](http://www.schoolmatters.com/App/SES/SPSServlet/StaticMenuRequest?MenuType=n
aep_comparative_state_performance_2005_schoolmatters.shtml&MenuLevel=1).



ACCESS TO COLLEGE

Ever timely, the next "Education News Parents Can Use" broadcast (January 17, 8:00-9:00 ET) will discuss preparing for education beyond high school. Recent statistics enforce the need for higher education: about 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require postsecondary education, and, on average, college graduates earn nearly twice as much as workers with only a high school diploma. And, many of today's new jobs require skill and proficiency in math and science. Fortunately, now, more than ever, post-secondary education is within reach if academic and financial preparation begins early. The broadcast will look at efforts to align high school standards with college entrance requirements, provide better academic and financial supports to students, and support innovative programs that expose students to college early, to ensure that all students gain access to a high quality postsecondary education and succeed once they get there. It will also spotlight the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/>. (You can watch live and archived webcasts at <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>.)



APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Before adjourning for the year, Congress sent to President Bush two bills concerning education appropriations. (Note: As of publication, those bills had not yet been signed into law by the President.) In addition, a third bill -- a budget reconciliation bill that would make significant changes to the student loan program -- is awaiting approval by the House of Representatives when it returns January 31.

One of the bills, the Department of Defense's Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations bill, includes hurricane-related aid: \$750 million for public and private schools that were directly affected by hurricanes and \$645 million for public and private schools that have enrolled displaced students (in increments of \$6,000 for general education students and \$7,500 for special education students). "The Department of Education will

expedite delivery of this aid to where it is needed," Secretary Spellings stated after the vote (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/12/12222005.html>). "We are working on a streamlined application process...so states can receive the money quickly."

Together, Defense's appropriations bill (containing a one percent, across-the-board cut to all federal programs, except veterans' programs) and Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations bill reduces the agency's discretionary spending from FY 2005 levels (-\$624 million). Nevertheless, the agency's top priorities are still well funded:

- \$12.7 billion for Title I grants to local education agencies;
- \$1 billion for Reading First, \$103 million for Early Reading First, and \$30 million for Striving Readers;
- \$10.6 billion for special education grants; and
- \$13.05 billion in Pell Grants for low- and middle-income undergraduates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/news.html#06action>.



FLU INFORMATION

It's that time of year! To help parents, administrators, teachers, and staff concerned about the flu, the Department's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS) recently released a compilation of information and resources on preventing the spread of influenza. Schools are encouraged to be creative in keeping their communities healthy by posting information about hand washing in restrooms, providing flu messages during daily announcements, and being vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting classroom materials. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/flu-resources.html>.



FROM THE INTERAGENCY STAFF...

As part of its *We the People* initiative, the National Endowment for the Humanities is collaborating with the American Library Association to offer the *We the People*

Bookshelf -- a program to encourage young people to read and understand great literature while exploring themes in American history. Public and school libraries are invited to apply to receive the Bookshelf, which consists of 15 thematically related books and supplemental materials to help with publicity and the organization of programs; at least 1,000 libraries will be chosen. (Every year the Bookshelf explores a different theme. For 2005-06, the theme is "Becoming American.") Applications will be accepted online through January 17. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.neh.gov/wtp/bookshelf/>.



TRACKING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The annual Monitoring the Future survey of U.S. secondary students, conducted since 1975, finds alcohol and tobacco use among teens are at historic lows, and the number of students using marijuana or steroids -- considered a gateway to other drug abuse -- has decreased. Indeed, 700,000 fewer students were using illicit drugs in 2005 than 2001. However, the abuse of prescription drugs like Oxycontin is rising, and sedative abuse is at its highest level in 26 years. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/>.



QUOTE TO NOTE

"I applaud Congress for approving [hurricane] assistance. President Bush assured school districts and families that they would be reimbursed for the unexpected costs of providing a quality education to the thousands of displaced students...who were not spared by the storm. This legislation will help us meet that promise. It will also help repair and reopen educational institutions in the Gulf Coast region that were damaged or destroyed.... The education community's response to Katrina has been overwhelming. Schools have opened their doors and hearts to these children. They need and deserve this support."

-- Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (12/22/05)



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 5 and 6, Secretary Spellings and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will co-host the U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education. The summit will focus on how to attract foreign students and scholars to study in the U.S., as well as how to encourage more American students to receive part of their education abroad.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/12/12282005.html>.

Now in its third year, the National School and Business Partnerships Awards, created by the Council for Corporate and School Partnerships, recognize exemplary school-business partnerships that improve the academic, social, or physical well-being of students. Partnerships involving public schools and/or districts and businesses are eligible to apply. The Council will make six awards; those selected will get \$10,000. Applications are due by January 30. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO

<http://www.corpschoolpartners.org/award.shtml>.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Communications and Outreach with any questions:

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